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Community

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COMMUNITY

by Alejandro Aldava

Community, according to Wikipedia, is a group of interacting people who live in some proximity. Usually, community is defined as a group of people who have a relationship with one another. This relationship can be geographical, cultural, or economical.

The first community children are introduced to is a family unit that raises that child. During young developing years, children are taught important social skills that are necessary and vital. These skills help children grow and be positive members within that community.

Geographical location often defines many communities. For example, in the United States, most people associate themselves with the state that they live in before any other community group. If you ask someone, "Where are you from?" most people in the United States would reply, "Oklahoma" or "Texas" before saying America. Growing up in the same area, geographically, gives people common jobs, accents, and manners, so they feel closer to the people from these areas than from other places. I have lived in Oklahoma most of my life, and when I have met people away from home, if they are from Oklahoma, I always feel a sense of closeness to those people that I will never feel for someone from Maine or Ohio, for example.

Cultural Communities are not bound together by location but by common values, beliefs, language, and ideas. Someone who lives on the east coast of the United States could feel a sense of community with another person who lives in California. In the United States today, many Mexicans have not been to Mexico in years, yet they still feel a sense of community with people who live in Mexico. I was born in Mexico, and even though I have lived in the United States since the age of six, I still feel connected with my birthplace. When walking in the market, or out in public, I will sometimes hear another person speaking Spanish. I immediately feel a connection with that person even though I have never met him or her before.

I often feel that sense of community with many Mexicans and Latinos. I understand the hardships that they have faced when moving out of their native country and to the United States.

Many Mexicans who live in the United States have to adapt to this new world and new culture.

Mexicans have to learn the English language to be able to work and be a productive member of their new community. There are number of Latinos and Mexicans who do not speak a single word of English, and they cannot communicate with anyone except their own family, so they have a difficult time belonging to the new community they have moved into geographically. When people go to the store or out in public and they hear another person speak the same language it brings them a remembrance of their land, their home, and a sense of belonging.

Economic community greatly differs from both geographical and cultural community. This type of community is bound together by money and status. People with similar social statuses, due to wealth, will often belong to the same country club, or go to the same places for recreation. I feel this is a very loose type of community with very little loyalty.

Today the boundaries of community have become more blurred because of technology. The internet has allowed people from all over the world to connect and find other people who share the same ideas and beliefs as their own. The close-knit societies of the past are fast being wiped out by computers and the ability to communicate with others across the globe. Money, language, and countries of origin no longer matter to the new computer communities of today. The loyalty and love, most people feel associated with their own community is a lasting feeling that starts at a very young age and will continue until death. I will be a Mexican, an Okie, and an Immigrant for the rest of my life, no matter where life takes me.